



Billing Code 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Safety and Inspection Service

9 CFR Parts 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 537, 539, 540, 541, 544, 548, 550, 552, 555, 557, 559, 560, and 561

[Docket No. FSIS-2017-0039]

Educational Meeting on the Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived from Such Fish Final Rule Implementation

AGENCY: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notification of educational meeting.

SUMMARY: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing an educational meeting to discuss the enforcement and implementation of the Final Rule, "Mandatory Inspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes and Products Derived from Such Fish." Fish of the order Siluriformes include fish of several families, including catfish (fish of the family Ictaluridae), basa, tra, and swai (fish of the family Pangasiidae), and clarias (fish of the Clariidae family). FSIS will present information on the upcoming full implementation of the regulatory requirements at official domestic establishments that process Siluriformes fish and fish products, as well as information on entry procedures and reinspection at official import inspection establishments. FSIS is particularly interested in soliciting participation from

representatives from domestic wild-caught operations that process Siluriformes fish and fish products.

The primary objectives of the meeting are to provide updated information to stakeholders and to encourage dialogue between FSIS and the Siluriformes fish industry. Affected industry and interested individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders are invited to participate in the meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held in Webster, FL on Friday, August 25, 2017; 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. ET, at the Florida Bass Conservation Center, 3583 CR 788, in Webster, FL. For directions and parking instructions, please visit: http://myfwc.com/media/244914/FBCC_rack_card08.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Evelyn Arce, Outreach and Partnership Division, Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training, FSIS, 1400 Independence Ave., SW Mail Stop 3778, Washington, DC 20250; Telephone: (202) 418-8903; Fax: (202) 690-6519; Email: Evelyn.Arce@fsis.usda.gov, regarding additional information about this meeting or to arrange for special accommodations.

Questions regarding the mandatory inspection of fish of the order Siluriformes and products derived from such fish may be directed to AskFish@fsis.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Further information on these meetings will be posted on FSIS Web site at:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings> and through the *FSIS Constituent Update*.

The final rule may be accessed from the FSIS Web site at:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulations/federal-register/interim-and-final-rules>.

Registration: To pre-register for the meeting, please go to
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/meetings>.

Background

On December 2, 2015, FSIS published the final rule to establish a mandatory inspection program for fish of the order Siluriformes and products derived from these fish (80 FR 75590). The final rule and other resources and information on Siluriformes fish can be found on the FSIS "Inspection Program For Siluriformes Fish, Including Catfish" webpage:
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/inspection/siluriformes>.

The final rule was effective March 1, 2016; however, the Agency provided an 18-month transitional period until September 1, 2017, to give domestic establishments time to prepare and comply with the final regulations. The transitional period also provided foreign countries with time to submit the documentation necessary to continue exporting Siluriformes fish and fish products to the United States and to show that they have equivalent inspection systems.

FSIS began inspecting domestic establishments on March 1, 2016, and began selecting imported Siluriformes fish shipments for reinspection on April 15, 2016. During the transitional period, FSIS inspection personnel have exercised broad discretion in enforcing the regulatory requirements, focusing primarily on preventing adulterated or misbranded Siluriformes fish and fish products from entering commerce.

On August 2, 2017, to abide with direction from Congress, FSIS began reinspecting all imported Siluriformes fish and fish products. Specifically, the explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, Public Law 115-31 Stat. 135, enacted May 5, 2017, directed FSIS to immediately begin reinspecting all imported Siluriformes fish and fish product shipments <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2017/05/03/CREC-2017-05-03-bk2.pdf>). FSIS announced its intention to begin this reinspection in a *Federal Register* notice on July 3, 2017 ("Import Reinspection of Fish of the Order Siluriformes" (82 FR 30721)).

FSIS held a series of domestic and import educational meetings when the final rule initially published in December 2015. More recently, in June and July 2017, FSIS held additional educational meetings in Richmond, VA, and Baltimore, MD. Another educational meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2017, in Memphis, TN. FSIS has gained significant insight into

the domestic and importing Siluriformes fish industries during the transitional period.

FSIS is announcing this educational meeting to provide updates regarding full implementation of the regulatory requirements and to exchange information with operations that process wild-caught Siluriformes fish and fish products, and thus encourages representatives and parties involved in this industry to attend the educational meetings. The Agency is particularly interested in gaining additional insight into how the wild-caught Siluriformes fish arrive at processing facilities, where the wild-caught Siluriformes fish are sourced, daily production volume information for these facilities, and where the final Siluriformes fish and fish products are being sold or distributed after processing.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, FSIS will announce this Federal Register publication on-line through the FSIS Web page located at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/federal-register>.

FSIS also will make copies of this publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, Federal Register notices, FSIS public meetings, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our

constituents and stakeholders. The Update is available on the FSIS Web page. Through the Web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience. In addition, FSIS offers an e-mail subscription service which provides automatic and customized access to selected food safety news and information. This service is available at:

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Done at Washington, DC on: August 17, 2017.

Paul Kiecker
Acting Administrator
[FR Doc. 2017-17757 Filed: 8/21/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 8/22/2017]